104-10066-10005

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NEWS RELEASE

THOMAS N. DOWNING
1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 4 -- Rep. Thomas N. Downing (D-Va.), chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, announced today that Philadelphia attorney Richard A. Sprague has ~~accepted~~ BEEN NAMED TO the position of acting counsel and director of the committee which will re-investigate the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The appointment of Sprague, who was responsible for a murder conviction against former United Mine Workers president W. A. "Tony" Boyle in the Yablonski murder cases, is temporary until the full committee can act at its Nov. 15 meeting.

"I am extremely gratified that Mr. Sprague has accepted this challenge," Downing said. "I have every confidence in his ability to get at the truth. His tenacity in following through an investigation is well known and highly respected, and I believe the American people are fortunate to have his services in this matter. As chairman of the select committee, I shall do everything within my power to make his difficult task less difficult."

Sprague, now in the private practice of law in Philadelphia, was formerly first assistant district attorney of Philadelphia County and served as special assistant to the U.S. Attorney General for the federal prosecution of Boyle in 1969.

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Boyle was convicted of conspiracy to murder his UMW rival Joseph A. Yablonski and Yablonski's familiy following a long and complicated trial in which Sprague was chief prosecutor.

A member of the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court and the American and Pennsylvania Bar Associations, Sprague holds degrees from Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Downing said that with Sprague's appointment, the select committee can now begin its substantive effort to re-examine the deaths of two of this country's most prominent figures.

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